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time, it must have its roots mainly in natural science and history; then and only then has it a right to hope that it will regain that interest on the part of the educated public which it has lost.

IS THOUGHT THE THINKER?

To the Editor of the Journal of Speculative Philosophy.

MY DEAR SIR:—Allow me to draw your attention to a proposition in Philosophy of vast importance, which has as yet had no discussion nor the least attempt at justification upon the part of those who put it forward, and who only thus quietly assume its truth as a mere matter of course. The proposition I allude to is this:—Thinking is that which thinks. Perceiving is the Percipient. Action is, in all cases, the only Agent. “*Das Denken,*” says Hegel, “*ist das Ich.*” The same thing is also otherwise expressed by saying that there is nothing existing except things whose *esse* is *percipi*—the things commonly, in Metaphysics, called Phenomena. This tenet which was originally put forward by David Hume for the obvious purpose of turning all Metaphysics into ridicule, especially the doctrine that had been recently taught with so much success by Berkeley, had to some little extent the desired effect in England, Scotland and Ireland among the less speculative portion of the educated. Even now we have occasionally a History of Speculative Philosophy to show that there can be no such thing at all as Speculative Philosophy, and a criticism of Berkeley’s doctrine to show, without a blush, that the critic could see no sense in it. The fate of Hume’s supposed metaphysical tenet, however, in Germany was very different. It there, indeed, effectually obstructed Berkeley’s *reputation* for nearly a whole century even among the metaphysicians of that country. But it did not obstruct metaphysical research, nor did it even obstruct the progress of Berkeley’s *doctrine* there. On the contrary, it was under the influence of Hume’s silly tenet that metaphysical research, involving the phenomenal nature of matter, has had its bright career in Germany. It was under its influence that this began at Königsberg and ended at Berlin. Kant gravely rejected Hume’s jest, and Hegel as gravely accepted it with all the

rest of Schelling's tenets then propounded. Hegel, instead of allowing it to turn Speculative Philosophy into ridicule as Hume intended that it should, took the bull by the horns as Schelling had done before him, and boldly, but silently, as it were unconsciously, incorporated the fantastic tenet with his own system. He nowhere seeks to justify it, nor does Schelling. Neither of them seems to think that any one could possibly differ from Hume upon the point in question.

The most popular English writer whom I know of as now gravely holding Hume's jest, is Professor Huxley, as may be seen in his recent article in the Fortnightly Review for February (this year), where also may be observed this utter absence of all attempt at justification, which I find equally in the case of every one who holds this view. Let it be said, however, for England that Professor Huxley does not pretend to be a metaphysician.

The want of discussion hitherto upon this point as to whether there exists anything except Phenomena and their laws, the want even of explicit statement upon the part of those who hold that there is nothing else existing, leaves it entirely uncertain upon what grounds they entertain the tenet, and even what it, in its full extent, amounts to. On this latter point four conjectures present themselves: Do these writers mean to say, (1) that a phenomenon can perceive itself? or (2) that one phenomenon is able to perceive another? or (3) that, as Hume assured us, a group of Phenomena can perceive, although one isolated phenomenon cannot? or do they mean that (4) there is nothing at all which can perceive anything—nothing at all which can perceive even a phenomenon—nothing at all which can perceive even pain, or light, or sound—things whose *esse* is *percipi*?*

A frank statement upon this point, and some little hint as to a ground or reason for holding such a doctrine at all, would constitute at this moment a valuable contribution to Speculative Philosophy, and would, in your columns, accord well with the grand purpose of the Journal, and the deserved favor in which it stands with thinking men in all quarters of the world.

Faithfully yours,

T. COLLYNS SIMON.

* The points here mentioned are discussed in the Introduction on page 344 of this number of the Journal.